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C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 000679

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/15/2019  
TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [CASC](#) [SN](#)  
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE CONDUCTS EXERCISE SIMULATING  
MUMBAI-STYLE TERRORIST ATTACK

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel Shields for Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) CDA and Embassy consular and law enforcement officers observed the final part of the Government of Singapore's "Northstar VII" crisis response exercise held at the Rasa Sentosa Hotel on July 15. The exercise simulated a Mumbai-style terrorist "swarm" assault from the sea on Singapore. The part of the exercise we saw involved Police Coast Guard vessels interdicting a speedboat with terrorists trying to land; a terrorist attack on individuals in the hotel's swimming pool area; the terrorists seizing hostages and retreating into the hotel; then Singapore Armed Forces Special Operations Task Force commandos performing a fast rope insertion from helicopters onto the roof of the hotel, storming the affected areas of the hotel, and rescuing hostages. Previous parts of the exercise were held overnight on July 6 and 7 at various hotels and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) stations in the heart of Singapore's Central Business District and Orchard Road shopping district.

¶2. (C) PM Lee Hsien Loong, DPM S. Jayakumar, DPM and Defense Minister Teo Chee Hean, Minister of Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng, Minister of Education (and Second Defense Minister) Ng Eng Hen, Minister of Law K. Shanmugam, Ministry of Home Affairs PermSec Benny Lim, Internal Security Department Director Pang Kin Keong, Police Commissioner Khoo Boon Hui, Acting Deputy Police Commissioner Soh Wai Wah and other senior GOS officials observed the exercise. The CDA thanked the PM for the Government of Singapore's decision to include Embassies as observers of the exercise. Minister Wong said he was pleased that Singapore had been able to put together relatively quickly a fairly comprehensive exercise involving a Mumbai-like attack. DPM Teo expressed satisfaction that the various parts of the GOS, particularly the police and the military, had worked together effectively.

¶3. (C) Minister Ng said a lesson learned from Mumbai had been the need to manage information to prevent the terrorists from using the media to gather information that provided them a tactical advantage. He praised London's handling of the media in the London Underground terrorist attacks. CDA noted the need for any government to strike the right balance between disclosing information that the public needs and preventing the disclosure of information that would give terrorists an advantage. Acting Deputy Police Commissioner and Chief of Staff Soh Wai Wah told Consular Chief, Legal Attache and ICE Attache that the July 15 exercise and the exercises on July 6 and 7 were designed to send a message through the media to terrorist organizations not to try a Mumbai-style attack in Singapore.

14. (C) Comment: As Police Commissioner Khoo indicated following the Mumbai attacks, the GOS is working proactively on a whole of government basis to improve its capacity to prevent or deal with this kind of attack. The GOS clearly wants not only to improve its capabilities, but to show foreign governments, Singapore's public, and potential terrorists that Singapore is working hard to address the issue. There was a heavy media presence observing and recording Northstar VII.

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